



Julie and Wade Cursan have been foster parents since January 2004. They live in the town of Waukesha in the home Wade grew up in. Julie is a busy stay at home mom with two sons. Wade works for Metal Tek International

> Wade and Julie decided to become foster parents because they have been blessed with two healthy children and they know there are children in the area who are not so fortunate. They want to provide a safe and loving home.

> At the present time, Julie and Wade are foster parents to a little boy from Waukesha County and are on loan to Milwaukee County who has given them a sibling group of three. To say the least Julie and Wade are very busy. Julie states that she has seen some big time changes in the children she has fostered. She states that the fostering

experience has taught their own children a great and they see them selves, as a "foster family" not just foster par-

The PACE training has given Julie and Wade some insights into some of the behaviors their foster children have. They learned that the children are reacting to the past abuse and they suffered and behavior is not directed

Julie's advise to new foster parents is to keep an open mind be non judgmental and parent from your heart. She also stays having a big enough lap to hold several children at one time is

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha H & HS 262-548-7212

Eve Altizer Children's Mental Health Outreach 262-548-7310

Crisis Mentoring Pager 414-848-6711

Medical Emergency; 911 Family Emergency: 211

Judy David Support Group President 414-671-3747 (home) 414-462-8446

Lisa Alden, Supervisor 262-548-7271

Shari Rather Foster Care Coordinator 262-548-7267

Amber Sparks Visitation Coordinator 262-896-6849

Oct. '05 Placements

Regular Foster Care:

66 Children

0 Admitted 1 Discharged

Treatment Foster Care:

29 Children

1 Admitted 0 Discharged

Group Homes:

7 Children

1 Admitted 1 Discharged

Residential Care Facilities:

9 Children

0 Admitted

0 Discharged

Relative Placements:

35 Children

6 Admitted

4 Discharged

Social Workers:

Bob Alioto

262-548-7262

Peggy Beisser

262-548-7261 Kathe Blum

262-548-7275

Barb Hufschmidt

262-548-7270

Margaret Johnson

262-548-7265

Suzanne Koberstein

262-548-7348

Elizabeth Russo

262-548-7349

Kim Sampson

262-548-7273

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Marilyn Vidergar

262-548-7363

Ted Wuerslin 262-548-7269

Jennifer Wygle

262-548-7260

We Need You!

For more information about becoming a foster parent in Waukesha County, please contact Shari Rather at:

srather@waukeshacounty.gov 262-548-7267 or visit our web-

and follow the links to foster

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Would you like to receive this newsletter via e-mail instead of mail? Please e-mail: srather@waukeshacounty.gov to complete this request. You can also find it online at www.waukeshacounty.gov.

Place Stamp















Shared Parenting Benefits Everyone

Especially Foster Parents! by Janine Russell and John McMahon

Waukesha Health and Human Services is working hard to increase the amount of contact between foster parents and birth parents.

Agencies are encouraging face-to-face meetings between birth and foster parents within the first week of placement. Social workers are urging foster parents to call birth parents on the phone, to request pictures of the child's family to display in the child's room, and to take other steps to bring the presence of birth parents into their homes.

The point of these activities, which are all inspired by an approach to fostering called shared parenting, is not just contact between birth and foster parents, but the development of an actual partnership focused on the wellbeing of the child.

Certainly, the well-being of children is a strong selling point with foster parents: they care very deeply about children, and few would hesitate to take any action they believed would make the children in their homes healthier, happier, or more secure.

Yet in their efforts to convince foster parents of the value of shared parenting, social workers and others sometimes fail to describe the benefits of this approach for one of the most important players in the world of child welfare: foster parents themselves.

We would like to correct this oversight by exploring with you some of the ways we think shared parenting can make the lives of foster parents better. We will begin by looking at one of the most powerful influences on the behavior of children in out-of-home care: the birth family.

Problems with Family Roles

Most of us would agree that the job of parents is to nurture children, teach them, and

raise them to be healthy adults. Likewise, most of us would agree that the child's job is to grow, learn, play, and behave like a child.

In most families, the line between these two iobs is clear. However, during times of stress and crisis this line may blur. If the stress is severe enough, for example during a parent's struggle with substance abuse, the child may begin to assume parents' roles and to act as an "adult" in the home.

However, children—especially young children—aren't equipped to worry about health problems, money, substance use, domestic violence, marital conflict, etc. Of course, children rarely tell us in words that they can't manage adult stress. Instead, they do it through their behavior: some withdraw, others act out.

Continued Confusion

When children in this position are placed in foster care, they often have a hard time simply being children. Foster parents offer a safe, stable, loving environment, but the overwhelming responsibility these children have shouldered—caring for mom or dad, caring for a sibling, taking care of themselves—continues to press upon them.

Until the child can trust that someone else will assume this responsibility, his or her ability to do the work of a child—growing, playing, learning-will be undermined, as will the child's well-being.

Sorting Out Roles

One way foster parents can help children let go and become a child again is by working in partnership with the child's birth parents. When children see harmony among the adults in their lives, they relax and begin to return to the child role. They worry less and spend less time trying to "fix" the adults around them.

Seeing their birth and foster parents working together can change the way children function. Indeed, when they feel supported, birth families will sometimes work with foster parents to give the child "permission" to be OK in the foster home. Over time, it becomes less important to children to defy foster parents so they can prove their loyalty to their birth family. By reducing that division of loyalty, foster parents can gain valuable ground with the children.

Other Benefits

Birth parents can also give foster parents precious information and insights about the child. With this information, foster parents may find they can meet the child's needs earlier in the relationship, and more effectively. This, in turn, can ease their own anxiety and frustration.

Shared parenting can sometimes create a bridge between the two families. When the family recovers and the child returns home, lines of communication sometimes remain open. In this way, the foster parent and the child remain "family" despite living in different households, having separate ancestry, and having different blood ties. Isn't being family what most of us are really looking

Foster parents who don't make children choose their parents will never risk not being chosen. And though they may not verbalize their appreciation, the children will not turn away from you. Just as parents have love for all of their children, children have love enough to give all of their par-

WHHS is planning the Shared Parenting Training for our foster parents and social workers on April 29 and May 6 the training is 12 hours and will be taught by Amy Hansen. More info to follow.

Jesse's Corner Happy

of the year brings out the best in all of us! With that in mind, we have received a generous donation from GE Medical and the Waukesha County Noon Kiwanis Club for Christmas. GE Medical is once again providing gifts for all children age birth to 12 years old. The Kiwanis Club is providing Christmas Stockings for all the children in foster care. Your social worker will follow up and contact you about these wonderful gifts for your foster children. I would like to thank all the staff at GE Medical and the Kiwanis Club for their generous dona-

tions and making this a wonderful time for our foster

children. When you get a chance please call them or send

them a card thanking them for their generous donations!

As some of you may know, the PEP (Program Enhancement Plan) is recommending ongoing training for foster parents. As a result, we're planning to offer ongoing foster parent training next year through the Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership. We plan on providing the first two training opportunities twice next year. We'll start with providing six (6) hour extended training on Attachment and twelve (12) hour training on Shared Parenting. The third training offered will be 3 to 6 hour training on Fostering the Sexually Abused Child. The third training will be offered only once next year. We'll keep you posted and will inform you when and where the trainings will be offered. These trainings will be free of charge!

Since all of you have completed the PACE training or something equivalent, we plan on reducing the number of PACE training offered next year from three to two. We'll continue to provide an additional PACE training collaboratively with Ozaukee and Washington County if needed.

Once again I would like to express my thanks for your willingness to provide a foster home to our most vulnerable children. YOU make a difference in people lives! Keep up the good work, be safe

and enjoy the Holidays! From all

of our staff to you and your family, Happy Holidays!

Social Worker Spotlight

Amber (Sparks) Kosek



Personal Information:

I actually just got married in October, so my name is no longer Amber Sparks but Amber Kosek. My husband and I have two cats, Phoebe and Bailey that we consider family members and who are continual sources of entertainment for us. I love reading, shopping, drinks with whipped cream and trying to improve my culinary skills. I am a huge fan of Law and Order (especially Criminal Intent),

and secretly aspire to practice law someday. When I am not working here at Waukesha County, I have fun working as a barista for a coffee shop.

Educational Background:

I graduated from UW-Whitewater in August of '05 with a B.A. in Social Work. My minor was in Human Services with an emphasis on child and family services. I am currently looking to go back to school and get my certification in paralegal work.

Work Experience:

My job as visitation coordinator is actually my first job out of college. I had my internship over at Parent's Place where I worked as a facilitator of children's groups. I also worked as a visitation supervisor for the Prevention and Protection of Abused Children, Inc.

What brings you the greatest joy as a social worker and why did you become a social worker?

I love to see people be proactive in making positive changes in their own lives

Waukesha County Department of Human Services Presents the Winter Session of PACE Training 2006

February 2, 2006 6:15 pm to 9:15 pm	Teambuilding
February 4. 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Child Abuse and Neglect
	Child Development
February 18, 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Attachment, Separation, and Placeme
	Discipline and Behavior Management
March 4, 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Cultural Issues in Placement
	Primary Families
March 18, 2006 8;30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Sexual Abuse
	Effects of Care-giving on the Family
April 1, 2006	Permanency Issues for Children
8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	Permanency Issues for Families

All classes will be held at Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services located at 500 Riverview Avenue in Waukesha. Class size is limited to 24. Please call to register: 262-548-7267.

Kid Prints Year End Contest It's time to vote!!

\$50 will be awarded to the child that wins along with a outstanding achievement certificate! Courtesy of Pellegrini Design

August Picture of the Month:



Self titled: 3 Friends
Marissa, Age 6
In placement since March of
2005. She drew this picture for
her foster mom & dad.

Self titled: The Village Brittney, Age 13 In placement since March of 2005.

September Picture of the Month:



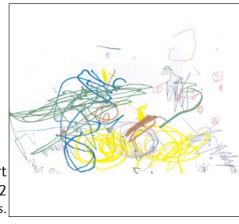
October Picture of the Month:



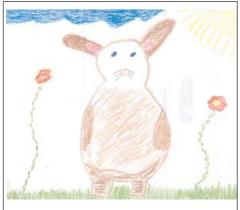
Titled: Home by Zaw, Age 15 In placement for 16 months. "This picture is about my whole family."

> Titled: Abstract Art by Sierra, Age 2 In placement for 17 months.

November Picture of the Month:



December Picture of the Month:



Titled: BunBun's by Ricardo, Age 10 In placement for 10 months. "I drew this picture because I like bunnies."

Kid Prints Contest Ballot: Cut this out and return to

Shari Rather/WHHS

500 Rivervew Ave. Waukesha, WI 53188

or email Shari at:

srather@waukeshacounty.gov

My vote is for (please circle only one):

August - Marissa

November - Sierra

September - Brittney

December - Ricardo

October - Zaw

We are using the honor system, so please, only one vote per person. Thank you.